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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 11 June 1991, at 6 p.m.

President: Mr. JASINKSI (Poland)

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Annual report of the Administrator for 1990 and programme-level activities (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 6.25 p.m.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1990 AND PROGRAMME-LEVEL ACTIVITIES (continued) (DP/1991/10 and Add.1 and 2; Add.3 and 4 and Corr.1 (Spanish only); DP/1991/11, DP/1991/12, DP/1991/13, DP/1991/14, DP/1991/15, DP/1991/57, DP/1991/68 and DP/1991/77)

1. Mr. SAHA (India), referring to the Human Development Report 1991, said he agreed with the Administrator regarding the need for in-depth consideration of the sensible reallocation of resources, participatory development with the active involvement of those concerned in the decision-making process, and the unleashing of the creative energies of the people to generate economic and social opportunities, since development was indeed not simply a means to economic growth, but a process of enlarging people's choices. Nevertheless, the report failed to address a number of issues, such as the right to freedom from hunger, the right to shelter and the right to development.

2. The report's main conclusion was that lack of political commitment, not of financial resources, was often the real cause of human neglect. Human development was based on economic growth, but also on firm political action. The developing countries could, for example, release their own resources by freezing military expenditure which, according to the report, absorbed 5.5 per cent of their total GNP. However, the report gave the impression that a restructuring of national budgets and international aid towards human development would be sufficient to release enormous resource potential. UNDP should decisively reject that argument, since it might lead to the assumption that if the resources that were hypothetically available were enough, no increase in development assistance was needed.

3. The 1991 report proposed means of refining the human development index (HDI), which, on the basis of income, life expectancy and literacy, ranked countries in terms of the value of the human development thus defined. In 1991, the portion of income above the poverty level was taken into account where level of knowledge was concerned; it was no longer assigned a zero weighting, as it had been the previous year, but a progressively diminishing one. Moreover, the report suggested that those in charge of public spending should use the human expenditure ratio - the percentage of national income devoted to human priority concerns - which needed to be at least 5 per cent for a country to achieve satisfactory human development.

4. On the basis of the principle that there was a high correlation between human development and human freedom, the report presented a human freedom index (HFI) based on the 40 indicators used by the British analyst Charles Humana to measure freedom. First of all, one might ask whether freedom of the press, reduced military spending, etc. could be regarded as indicators of overall development regardless of all cultural and other considerations. Moreover, other United Nations forums were looking very closely into such matters, and it might be wondered whether UNDP should

(Mr. Saha, India)

promote criteria of that kind. In any event, they should in no case lead to the imposition of new conditionalities where development was concerned.

5. With respect to international development assistance, the report pointed out that the restructuring of outside assistance could open up a new era for official development assistance and that the aid human expenditure ratio was a good index of a donor's contribution to human priority areas. The report rightly emphasized the need for reassessment of technical assistance, in the context of which a great deal was often spent on technical expertise and much less on providing national institutions with the means with which to operate and on mobilizing national expertise.

6. While the report's findings were useful, the methods used warranted scrutiny. Why the three measures of health, knowledge and standard of living had equal weights was not explained. Even when alternative methods of tracking the HDI were suggested, the assumption remained the same: the three components of that index were treated identically. However, as the technical notes pointed out, each component of the index could give rise to enormous variations depending on the way income was treated.

7. With respect to the "refinement" said to have been introduced into the HDI, it did not appear that taking years of schooling into account led to much change in the result obtained. The way in which income above the poverty level was taken into account was similarly arbitrary.

8. If the report was to be believed, the Bahamas, where adjusted average income was over twice the poverty level, had no more than a 3 per cent income utility advantage over those countries which were not above the poverty level; that appeared totally unrealistic.

9. While the concepts advanced in the report were valid, it was over-concerned for precision in an area in which its authors had themselves recognized the inherent limitations of that type of analysis. It was that which had led them, in constructing the human freedom index, to adapt Mr. Charles Humana's methodology without taking into account his decision to assign weightings to certain aspects, the usefulness of which they did not appear to perceive. While their human freedom index was admirable in its simplicity, the total absence of weightings made its conclusions arbitrary, perhaps even more so than those of Mr. Humana, who at least had perceived the usefulness of discriminating between the different freedoms, thus admitting that not all were equally important and that the world should not be simplified to the point of a black or white classification. His delegation wondered in that connection how the authors had found that only 14 freedoms were respected in each country; few objective observers would give India a zero on 26 of the 40 counts.

10. The methodological foundations of the report needed to be examined all the more closely in that the novelty of its indices had attracted a great deal

(Mr. Saha, India)

of attention. That was particularly true with respect to the human freedom index, which was perhaps the centrepiece of the 1991 report. Unless the defects in the methodology were identified early on, there was a risk that the effort at simplification would give rise to new ideas of equally doubtful merit regarding how to measure human development. In its future reports on human development, UNDP should focus more on practical areas relating to multinational technical cooperation for operational activities of the United Nations development system; in other words, it should fulfil its mandate.

11. The increasing emphasis UNDP was placing on the private sector was an issue which had not been the subject of a specific decision by the Governing Council. While the importance of that sector to the development process no longer needed to be demonstrated, UNDP should first of all ascertain that it did indeed possess a comparative advantage in that field. Its relative strength seemed to derive rather from its close cooperation with central government institutions and its focus on capacity-building within them. The belief appeared to be gaining hold within UNDP that public investment was less effective than private investment. That was but another unsubstantiated claim of the "free market". The free market could, although it appeared unjust and chaotic, meet the material needs of society. But to say that it could meet all of society's needs was to place too heavy a burden on the market and to divest the State of its responsibility towards the population.

12. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia) welcomed the shifts in the way UNDP thought and operated, and in particular the fact that the initiative for the Human Development Report, in which Governments were invited to redefine development in the light of human needs, had come from within UNDP itself.

13. The introduction in 1991 of the human freedom index might not be welcomed by all countries, but his delegation believed that its value lay not in a categorical statement of empirical truths, but in the better understanding it afforded of the concept of people-centred development. That did not mean that extreme care did not need to be taken in constructing the index, which in any event, as the Administrator had noted, needed to be refined.

14. The report also helped to bridge the communication gap which had long existed between the United Nations bodies dealing with human rights and those in the development area, given that economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development were mutually complementary. Two of the most important external factors influencing UNDP's development intervention were the Governing Council decisions of the past year on the fifth cycle and on a funding strategy. Those decisions should enable UNDP to concentrate on six key areas such as women in development and management development, and to urge for greater attention in areas where UNDP had a so-called comparative advantage, to improve programme quality and effectiveness and to reduce administrative costs.

(Mr. Babington, Australia)

15. UNDP would serve global development better by avoiding entanglement in too many projects in too many sectors. In that connection he supported the suggestion of the Danish delegation that UNDP shall elaborate on the "vertical" advantages and report thereon to the Governing Council at the next session. UNDP had a comparative advantage in management development. So far as the Management Development Programme (MDP) was concerned, he welcomed the progress made in implementing the MDP and agreed that MDP availability should be linked to the level of commitment of the leaders of the countries concerned to undertake major reforms. In the South Pacific, five countries had already sought assistance through MDP. UNDP should continue to coordinate their MDP activities with other programmes geared to the public sector, in particular the World Bank's municipal development programme.

16. More progress was needed to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The World Health Organization estimated that globally one in every 250 adults was infected with the virus. The developing world was especially hit hard: infection rates in some countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America were significantly higher than 10 per cent. The pandemic would have devastating effects on every aspect of development, especially as rates of infection increased among women and children.

17. UNDP played a vitally important part in the United Nations system's response to the pandemic by spreading awareness of the development implications and by enhancing the capacity of communities and Governments to respond. So far, however, UNDP had lacked a comprehensive policy approach. Australia therefore welcomed the policy framework paper submitted to the Council, especially its clear elaboration of goals, priorities and delivery mechanisms of the anti-HIV/AIDS programme, and the elaboration of guiding principles for policy development.

18. With regard to the issue of coordinating the United Nations system's efforts, and apart from the fact that the policy framework paper sought to clarify UNDP's role in the response of the United Nations, there was full collaboration between UNDP and WHO and other relevant agencies within the context of the WHO/UNDP alliance to combat AIDS. It was to be hoped that all organizations would continue to coordinate their activities so as to avoid potentially costly overlapping or duplication.

19. Recently the Council had allocated $5 million for the fifth cycle of UNDP's work in that area. More would have to be done, either through additional Special Programme Resources allocation or IPF or cost-sharing arrangements.

20. Some improvement in UNDP's attention to the role of women in development was noted. A rising number of project advisory notes reflected an increased grasp of gender issues and he commended the advances made in the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation to make gender competence a factor in staff appraisal, and the increased emphasis in women-in-development issues in the

(Mr. Babington, Australia)

current Human Development Report. Nevertheless, and although women in development was one of the six areas identified by the Council in 1990, the progress in bringing women-in-development concerns into the mainstream of programming and policy development at senior levels remained sluggish. In particular, only a small number of women were in senior positions in the Programme: only 6 out of 114 resident representatives were women.

21. Australia had long supported UNDP's work in the Asia/Pacific region. UNDP assistance was particularly valuable at times of natural calamity, e.g., when cyclones destroyed what had taken years of patient development effort to build. UNDP also played an important role in coordinating aid via the round-table process which, especially in the South Pacific, provided an opportunity for policy dialogue between development partners.

22. Ms. KEPPENS (Belgium) said that the Human Development Report 1991 rightly showed that effective utilization of available resources and their reallocation to real priority sectors were crucial for ensuring that the population truly benefited from economic development. In the same context, the leaders of developing countries and those responsible for the cooperation policy of donor countries could draw important conclusions from reading the report. Serious consideration should be given to making the human development composite indicator one of the factors for determining distribution of official aid funds and, in particular, the UNDP indicative planning figures.

23. She also welcomed the link which the report established between the ideas of participation, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the debate on economic and social development. Human development and the freedom of individuals were indissociable. UNDP should improve that new indicator of human liberty.

24. Her Government hoped that the Council would be able to provide definitive figures on the support costs at the current session. In particular, the Council should specify without ambiguity the way in which UNDP was to manage the new system and what the executing agents and the recipient countries could expect. If such a determination could not be provided at the present time, it would be advisable to follow the negotiations and to extend implementation of the current system for a further year.

25. With regard to execution by national entities, the importance of the tripartite relationship between UNDP, executing agents and recipient countries should be borne in mind - a relationship which assigned particular responsibilities to each of the three elements. The technical assistance provided by UNDP and the executing agents should be focused on human development and the self-sufficiency of the recipient countries. The procedure of execution by national entities, or by Governments themselves, actually created a new framework for that technical assistance by increasing the responsibility of the recipient countries in implementing programmes and projects.

(Ms. Keppens, Belgium)

26. That procedure should, however, be introduced progressively. The agents could continue to play an important role at the level of programme formulation and of the work carried out over and above operational projects. The executing agents should also help to promote that procedure by collaborating with the recipient countries in identifying and improving national capacities. In any event, the transfer of skills accompanying execution by national entities should be accompanied by the transfer of responsibility to local authorities in respect of the quality, relevance and impact of the programmes financed by UNDP.

27. Belgium supported the programme for strengthening managerial skills and considered that the recommendation, expressed in the evaluation of that programme, should be endorsed, after which the available funds should be allocated as a matter of priority, to countries which had undertaken large-scale reforms involving substantial upgrading of the capacities of their institutions.

28. Her delegation considered that refugee flows were becoming an increasingly permanent trend. UNDP must concern itself chiefly with the coordination and formulation of programmes for the integration in host countries, literacy and development of refugees, displaced persons and returnees. However, it questioned whether the UNDP humanitarian programmes support unit proposed in the Administrator's report could be set up without budgetary implications. On the subject of operational activities, it held the view that the recipient countries could allocate part of their IPFs to integration projects, thereby supplementing the funds from Special Programme Resources.

29. Environmental conservation was one of the most important tasks of the 1990s, and she hailed the fact that the environment was becoming one of the Programme's priority areas of activity. UNDP should evaluate in depth the effectiveness of each programme and project in environmental terms and make the necessary preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

30. As far as the senior management structure of UNDP was concerned, the proposal to introduce strategic decentralization had some interesting features, provided that it did not alter the specific character of UNDP, which must remain an organization whose operating methods were as flexible as possible in order to be able to meet the varied aspirations of all its members. In any event, her delegation was agreeable to the decentralization of responsibilities towards the resident representatives, the regional bureaux and the heads of divisions whose establishment was proposed.

31. She endorsed the comments of the representative of the Netherlands who, on behalf of the twelve member countries of the European Community, had affirmed the importance of the sound functioning of the Governing Council, to which the new Standing Committee for Programme Matters was expected to

(Ms. Keppens, Belgium)

contribute. It was to be hoped that all the problems concerning the mandate and work of the Committee would be solved promptly.

32. Mr. SUCHMAN (Observer for Czechoslovakia) said that the UNDP Governing Council was holding its thirty-eighth session at a time when the international community must respond effectively to new challenges in world affairs and reduce their impact on the economies of States. Particularly at issue were: the place of developing countries in East-West relations, the transition of Central and Eastern European countries to market-based economies and their integration in the world economy, sustainable development and the emphasis given to the development of human resources. However difficult those problems might be, they had to be tackled in a joint and coordinated approach by all nations.

33. What was manifest was that the development of mankind was contingent not only on increasing production, profit and wealth but also on the creation of conditions for a longer life, better health, quality education, political freedoms, human rights and respect for the human person. In other words, an environment conducive to a productive life must be created. That was why his delegation appreciated the reorientation of UNDP activities towards people-centred development and welcomed the UNDP initiative in country programming for human development.

34. Important qualitative social changes were under way in the subregion of Central and Eastern Europe. Economic restructuring had painful economic and social consequences. The transition from a centrally directed to a democratic pluralistic system with a market-oriented economy required changed thinking patterns. The transition period, which had been expected to last between three and five years, would probably be far longer, and much greater attention would have to be paid to its human dimension.

35. Since January 1991, Czechoslovakia had adopted such reform measures as price and foreign trade liberalization, the introduction of internal convertibility of the Czechoslovak crown and the adjustment of the exchange rate of the Czechoslovak crown. The privatization of small businesses was under way and the privatization of large enterprises had begun. Czechoslovakia was pursuing a restrictive monetary and fiscal policy to create an adequate framework for the economic reform. However, it must also face unexpected external problems such as the negative economic impact of the Persian Gulf crisis and the collapse of the CMEA market. Those problems could be overcome by a radical economic reform using external technological and financial assistance together with the economic cooperation of all countries. Czechoslovakia welcomed the assurance of the Western industrial democracies that they would continue to provide extensive technical and financial assistance to Eastern European countries through channels other than those for aid to developing countries.

(Mr. Suchman, Observer, Czechoslovakia)

36. The disappearance of the Iron Curtain had revealed the existence of a deep economic imbalance in Europe. The extent of the environmental degradation in Eastern European countries had shocked the entire world. Some feared that European States would be divided into prosperous and backward and that the new democracies might fail owing to economic collapse. In integrating the Central and Eastern European countries into the world economy, new opportunities for cooperation between them and the developing countries must be sought. It should be borne in mind that development in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe would create new opportunities also for developing countries, particularly in the field of trade and investments. Czechoslovakia was ready to participate in international cooperation programmes, including the multilateral technical cooperation programmes of the United Nations system. His delegation welcomed the proposal to hold a UNDP workshop on the development of commercial and economic cooperation with recipient countries in Czechoslovakia in 1991. The workshop would familiarize the major trading partners from all regions with the changes occurring in the Czechoslovak economy during the transition to a market system and with specific opportunities for trade and joint industrial production.

37. His delegation endorsed the programme-based approach which UNDP intended to adopt in national execution projects, together with decentralized management.

38. As a net contributing country, Czechoslovakia was preparing its national IPF projects and thus far had submitted to UNDP six major projects concerned with the development of telecommunications and postal services, the support of foreign investments, the restructuring of the mining industry and the improvement of the statistical system. It would be recalled that the volume of assistance obtained under UNDP projects would be compensated by Czechoslovakia's contributions to UNDP funds either in cash or towards regional or interregional projects. His delegation hoped that Czechoslovakia's net contributor status would be of a strictly temporary nature and would terminate as soon as its economic situation stabilized.

39. Mr. BOGNER (Austria) said that his delegation endorsed the Administrator's conclusion that the magnitude and complexity of the social, economic and environmental challenges were being increasingly realized. It, too, believed that the United Nations, with its distinctive feature of universality and impartiality, would play a major role in both political and social matters. The new International Development Strategy clearly defined the policies and measures that were required to accelerate development and strengthen international cooperation during the 1990s. A strengthening of the role of private enterprise, of democratic structures and of respect for human rights would be key elements in those endeavours, as the Administrator had rightly stated.

40. The publication by UNDP of a new report on human development was a much appreciated initiative. The strong response elicited by the second edition,

(Mr. Bogner, Austria)

in which the as yet imperfect Freedom Index was featured, showed that the report coincided with a real need. His delegation fully endorsed the concept of participatory development. That concept had to be applied to development strategies in general and to the future work of UNDP in particular. Specifically, it called for the enhanced inclusion of national institutions in the implementation of development projects and the strengthening of the role of NGOs and grass-roots movements.

41. His Government believed that UNDP could put its comparative advantages to good effect in the six priority sectors defined by the Governing Council in its decision 90/34. With its wealth of expertise in technical cooperation activities, UNDP had all the potential for playing a crucial catalytic role in helping the countries of Eastern Europe to overcome their economic and social difficulties. Setting up mechanisms that would enable UNDP to remain in very close contact with all partners involved would be extremely useful. Obviously additional financing would be required for such activities.

42. There were two highly important issues of concern to his delegation. The first was the question of funding. The 8 per cent growth rate for voluntary contributions during the fifth programming cycle was not very realistic, given the worldwide budgetary constraints. As several main donor countries had hinted that their voluntary contributions had reached a ceiling, the proposals concerning a radically new system for funding operational activities was well worth considering.

43. The second issue was the scope and volume of UNDP activities. It might be useful to recall that, of the total capital flows from the developed to the developing countries, grant aid for UNDP-financed technical cooperation activities amounted to less than 1 per cent. Those resources were nevertheless substantial and often constituted the only source of funding. It was therefore essential to make the most rational use of those resources. A high degree of division of labour would be necessary for achieving that objective. UNDP must be careful to draw on existing expertise in other bodies and to avoid duplication of efforts and structures. The current efforts applied to reforming the working mechanisms of the United Nations system clearly showed that many of the old structures and habits should be overhauled.

44. Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka) said that the Administrator had rightly emphasized the urgent need to place international cooperation at the centre of world affairs; there was no other way whereby worldwide peace and security could be achieved in those troubled times. He fully agreed that the emphasis should be placed on the importance of the human factor in development. It was precisely such realization which had convinced the people and Government of Sri Lanka that humiliating poverty could be alleviated only by a well-planned population-centred programme.

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

45. For that purpose, President Ranasinghe Premadasa had introduced a poverty alleviation concept ("Janasaviya"), based on a pragmatic approach. It could become a source of inspiration for other countries, but it was essentially a Sri Lankan programme with Sri Lankan roots. Approximately 1.4 million families were expected to participate. The President had recently inaugurated the Janasaviya Trust Fund which interlinked four components (credit, human resources, community projects and nutrition). Donor contributions could be made to any of those funds. A unique feature of the Trust was that all the component funds were disbursed through partner organizations. They could come from non-governmental organizations, people's organizations, and public or local government services which had a good record of working efficiently and responsibly with the poor. In that connection, Sri Lanka welcomed its close association with UNDP, the World Bank and the Federal Republic of Germany.

46. Management of the environment and the productive use of natural resources was the second priority of Sri Lanka, which coincided with the second guiding principle referred to by the Administrator. His Government was taking decisive steps to halt environmental pollution. Henceforth it would be necessary to obtain the permission of the Central Environmental Authority in order to start any new project or industry. A set of regulations governing environmental impact assessment would soon be presented in Parliament. A Presidential Task Force had been established to formulate a national conservation policy. The Metropolitan Environment Improvement Project, funded by UNDP, would soon be inaugurated.

47. His Government was consolidating an open-market economy, being firmly convinced that that was the most effective way of ensuring rapid economic development and job creation in Sri Lanka. The governmental controls had been considerably relaxed since 1977, but more work had to be done in many areas such as industrialization, investment promotion, export development and public enterprise management. Increased production and higher productivity would be emphasized in those sectors.

48. Overall management of the development process, whereby people-centred economic and social development was encouraged, could be one of the major themes for UNDP assistance to Sri Lanka under the fifth country programme. Sri Lanka believed that it was primarily for the recipient Government to determine how best to carry out UNDP-funded activities. It was desirable to see the projects managed by Sri Lankans wherever possible. UNDP could help to strengthen the Government's capacity to administer UNDP inputs.

49. The UNDP fourth country programme in Sri Lanka (1977-1991), which had been implemented in difficult circumstances, had contributed considerably towards furthering the economic and social development of Sri Lanka. In the Human Development Report 1990, Sri Lanka had been cited for its relatively high human development index, thanks to the investment which the Government had made in education and health care, in addition to food and health service subsidies.

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

50. The Human Development Report 1991 took human freedom into account in establishing the human development index. That was a bold step. There was, however, a need for taking into consideration the prevalent internal situation and cultural values of each country with a view to reaching an objective assessment. Sri Lanka was firmly committed to the human freedoms enunciated in the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and relevant Covenants. It submitted itself voluntarily to periodic examination by the relevant monitoring bodies. However, the Sri Lankan people and Government were still engaged in an unrelenting struggle against terrorism which was a deadly threat to human freedom. They had a right to expect the understanding and support of all those committed to human freedom in the effort to re-establish normalcy in their country.

51. Sri Lanka appreciated UNDP's continuing role in its economic and social development. For 39 years a number of its institutions had benefited from some form of UNDP cooperation. His delegation was also happy to announce that Sri Lanka's contributions to UNDP had increased over the years and exceeded $1 million.

52. Mr. PETTITT (United Kingdom) remarked that the representative of the Netherlands had already expressed the views of the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom statement would be limited to very specific issues. His delegation endorsed the establishment of a new form of assistance for political development, e.g. as it had been provided to Haiti under the project referred to by the Administrator. The Commonwealth countries were already known to be receiving similar assistance through the Commonwealth Fund in the area of technical cooperation or other services extended by the Commonwealth Secretariat. Accordingly, the United Kingdom delegation suggested that UNDP should limit its assistance to serving other countries.

53. The work done by UNDP under the Management Development Programme was highly appreciated by the United Kingdom personnel dealing with development aid. He drew attention in particular to the assistance offered to the Public Service Review and Reorganization Commission in Uganda. Nevertheless, he was convinced that it was still possible to improve implementation of the management development projects, in matters of coordination with other donors. He had in mind not only the World Bank and the competent United Kingdom authority but also the European Community and the Commonwealth Secretariat.

54. His delegation's views concerning the HIV/AIDS question had been set forth by the representative of the Netherlands. British authorities would read with interest the policy document referred to on page 2 of the report (DP/1991/57).

55. With regard to the integration of women in development, general principles could be disseminated more widely among donors at the country level and be the subject of closer coordination. It might be a good idea for the

(Mr. Pettitt, United Kingdom)

resident coordinators to organize or sponsor meetings with the participation of United Nations bodies and bilateral donors.

56. His Government had previously announced that it would no longer provide development assistance for tobacco-related projects. The decision was prompted by scientific data demonstrating the adverse effects of tobacco on health. His delegation noted that UNDP financed technical assistance for a small number of projects in that area. It would like to know whether UNDP had adopted a position of principle on the subject, whether policy emanating from WHO or other United Nations bodies was currently the subject of discussion or being applied and what UNDP's plans were for the future.

57. Mr. DORANI (Djibouti) welcomed the quality of the documentation prepared by the Secretariat, but expressed the hope that in future it would be translated in time into all the working languages.

58. His delegation noted that mankind was moving towards a better world based on peace and social justice. However, centres of crisis still subsisted in certain regions, including the Horn of Africa, where war and famine continued to be people's daily lot.

59. The Republic of Djibouti had been affected not only by the Gulf crisis but also by the current crisis in the Horn of Africa. It was facing a critical economic and social situation because of the steady influx of refugees and its stability and security were also being threatened. None the less it had not shirked its responsibilities. His delegation would submit a draft resolution on the question which, it hoped, would win the support of all members of the Council. It noted with satisfaction the appeal launched by the Secretary-General to the donor community and the efforts he was making in that respect. It also welcomed the recent initiative taken by a group of donor countries, which had responded positively to the Secretary-General's appeal, and supported their proposal to organize a meeting between the countries concerned and the relevant multilateral organizations as soon as possible, in order to work out a common and coordinated response to critical humanitarian needs of the people in that region. It was sure that UNDP would have a contribution to make to that dialogue.

60. His delegation was convinced that there was a consensus in favour of giving priority to the least advanced countries, it being understood that each one should be able to set its own priorities. It hoped that UNDP and the international community would support the Government of Djibouti at the forthcoming local donor conference early in 1992. Since those consultations would coincide with the beginning of the fifth programming cycle they would provide another opportunity for stressing the country's special needs.

61. His Government had always attached considerable importance to UNDP's role as the principal element of the multilateral development assistance mechanism. UNDP's role in the 1990s should therefore be part of an overall

(Mr. Dorani, Djibouti)

effort to take all the relevant factors into account: desertification, drought, floods, additional costs due to the presence of refugees and displaced persons and so forth.

62. The Human Development Report 1991 did justice to the basic principle which guided UNDP's thinking, namely, that man was at the centre of development. However, his delegation felt, as did others, that the indicators must be improved and that quantifiable, less subjective elements must be found. It was unfortunate that no account had been taken of civil wars and other similar factors and, above all, the burden constituted by refugees and displaced persons. That would have provided a more realistic indicator of human development.

63. Mr. VILLEGAS (Observer for Mexico) said that the international context in which the current session of the Governing Council was being held, which was marked by a spirit of cooperation between groups of hitherto antagonistic countries, offered exceptional possibilities for advancing international cooperation and strengthening its basic principles. In that context, Mexico attached particular importance to the role played by UNDP as the principal instrument of the United Nations for promoting economic development, and was following its activities and discussions regarding its future plans and strategies with great interest. The complexity of those tasks and the responsibilities they entailed for UNDP required very thorough consideration of the basic principles of any international cooperation effort. Accordingly, non-conditionality and strict respect for self-determination of peoples were now assuming full validity as principles governing bilateral or multilateral cooperation activities. Equally important were the principles of universality, flexibility and neutrality which must be the basis for UNDP decisions concerning programming, evaluation and resource allocation activities. In that regard, Mexico had expressed concern at certain decisions concerning the fifth UNDP programming cycle, which had the effect of limiting the principle of universality by distributing resources in a manner that reduced the funds available to countries which had attained an intermediate level of development, instead of seeking new resources to meet the priority of the least developed.

64. His delegation was also concerned by certain implications that were contrary to the above-mentioned principles, and that publication of the Human Development Report 1991 was beginning to have; although the report was not an official document it was considered a UNDP document by the media. The report established categories according to very relative criteria concerning human freedom and advocated that the granting of multilateral or bilateral, public or private cooperation should be conditioned by those criteria. Another dangerous over-simplification, which the media had echoed, was the statement that developing countries no longer needed external financial resources for their economic development since they already had the resources, and that all they needed to do was to use them appropriately. That was to deny the efforts which many countries had made to put their economy on a sound footing and

(Mr. Villegas, Observer, Mexico)

improve their competitiveness, and to ignore the adverse consequences on development of problems such as the external debt, the protectionism of the industrialized countries and the declining value of raw materials which many developing countries depended on for their export earnings.

65. His delegation endorsed the statement made by the representative of Ghana, as Chairman of the Group of 77. Mexico had worked actively to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and had affirmed in the relevant bodies that those values could not be used as a means of political or economic pressure. Mexico had also said that democracy was not something that could be imported or exported and that it could not be imposed from outside. It had also pointed out that the real causes of social instability and the fragile evolution of democracy in Latin America were economic stagnation, inadequate levels of food, education and health and tremendous inequalities in the distribution of income. Those were problems which must be dealt with by using one's own resources. It was therefore up to the international community to encourage the establishment of an external climate favourable to the development of democracy.

66. Utilization of artificial and biased indices, as was the case in the chapter of the above-mentioned report on human freedoms, was dangerous and conducive to drawing hasty and fallacious conclusions. The Governing Council should therefore carefully review the mandate for the publication of the Human Development Report so as precisely to determine its scope and content, within the limits of UNDP's areas of competence. Furthermore, the Administrator should inform the Council of the outcome of the regional consultations that were to be organized to enable Governments to provide up-to-date information and to express their viewpoints concerning the orientation and interpretation of that information. His delegation stressed that its comments were designed to strengthen UNDP's role in the promotion of development, and reiterated its continued and resolute support for that task.

67. Mr. CHEW TAI SOO (Singapore) said that his country was appreciative of UNDP's invaluable help in laying the foundations for its economic development following independence in 1965. In more general terms, the report of the Administrator described the fine work accomplished by UNDP. The distribution of expenditure for 1990 showed that the focus continued to be placed on development. His delegation congratulated UNDP for thus adhering closely to the mandates spelt out in General Assembly resolutions 2688 (XXV) and 3405 (XXX).

68. The annex to resolution 3405 (XXX) emphasized, inter alia, that (a) the basic purpose of technical cooperation should be the promotion of self-reliance in developing countries; and (b) the selection of priority areas in which to seek the assistance of UNDP should remain the exclusive responsibility of the Governments of the recipient countries. Neither resolution made any provision for UNDP to introduce human rights into development issues or to link the provision of technical assistance to human

(Mr. Chew Tai Soo, Singapore)

rights. His delegation was therefore somewhat disappointed to note that the Human Development Report for 1991 included a controversial section entitled the "Human Freedom Index". As far as it understood, the Governing Council had not approved or authorized that initiative. Furthermore, the evaluation set out in the report was not objective. The authors had confined themselves to an arbitrary reproduction of findings by another organization based on a study carried out for different purposes. The data used were obsolete. By acting in that way, UNDP was lending its authority to the Humana Index, which had not been sanctioned by Member States.

69. In conclusion, his delegation fully endorsed the views expressed by the Permanent Representative of Ghana in his capacity as the Chairman of the Group of 77. It hoped that UNDP would bear those views in mind, since they reflected the real concerns of a majority of Member States. It also fully agreed with the representative of Japan that UNDP should make every possible effort to focus its attention on the economic development of recipient countries.

70. Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia) said that the changes in international relations made it possible, for the first time since the Second World War, to achieve global peace, justice and sustainable development. As the principal instrument of the United Nations system of technical cooperation for development, UNDP had a central role to play in those efforts. His delegation was therefore particularly pleased to note the Governing Council's response to the changes, as reflected in its decision 90/34, adopted in the wake of General Assembly resolution 44/211. The report of the Administrator also reflected the changing milieu. As indicated in the section of the report concerning technical cooperation, a new sense of urgency had developed, in recognition of the magnitude and complexity of social and economic problems and of the planet's environmental fragility. In that context, his delegation concurred with the Administrator's emphasis on five areas of development challenge for the 1990s, namely, the transition to democracy, human development, sustainable development and global environment, disarmament and new modes of global cooperation.

71. His country attached great importance to human development and recognized that human beings were both the active agents and the objective of the development process. Three years previously, growing awareness of the importance of human development in the ESCAP region had culminated in the adoption of the Jakarta Plan of Action, a useful guide by which to enhance the quality of life of the people of that region. It should also serve as a means to unleash the full potential of the people through their participation in development. His delegation was pleased to note that UNDP now placed greater emphasis on human development, rather than on per capita GNP, which had been its traditional yardstick. In that context, it supported the ways in which UNDP was promoting human development through its activities at the national, regional, interregional and global levels. It hoped that the new concept of human development would gain its rightful place on the global agenda and that

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strategies to implement it at the national level would attract adequate IPF allocations and other funding.

72. However, his delegation was disappointed and concerned by the publication of the Human Development Report for 1991. The inclusion of a Human Freedom Index in the report raised serious questions, because its inclusion ran counter to the spirit and the letter of Governing Council decision 90/13 and to the consensus of 1970, which established a comprehensive framework for UNDP activities. The Index was also incompatible with General Assembly resolution 44/211, which stated that the national goals and priorities of the recipient countries formed the only basis for cooperation. Secondly, his delegation believed that the Index was based on arbitrary criteria which demonstrated a large measure of insensitivity to different traditions and cultures. It could also divert attention from such crucial development issues as the adverse external environment and the imbalance in global economic relations, which must be solved if the development prospects of the developing countries were to be improved. Thirdly, the complete absence of prior consultation with the recipient countries in order to reflect their development priorities and concerns was regrettable. His country therefore endorsed the position of the Group of 77 on that issue.

73. In the context of human development, his delegation also attached particular importance to the concept of self-reliance. As a development policy objective, self-reliance was necessary not only to enable countries and peoples to control their own economic destinies but also as a crucial element to ensure that their development efforts were sustainable. However, self-reliance measurements should not be allowed to replace economic growth criteria. They should instead be used to complement economic indicators which did not adequately address the issues of inequality and poverty. The emphasis given to self-reliance should therefore help promote a greater focus on grass-roots participation, including non-governmental organizations and women in development, and on narrowing the gap between North and South. Procurement from developing countries, as noted in document DP/1991/53, was also an important means of promoting self-reliance and enhancing national capacities. In that respect, his country considered the trend towards greater national execution to be a positive one, which should be strengthened during the fifth programming cycle.

74. In a fragile planet with limited resources and an expanding population, protection of the environment was another important item of the new agenda. His delegation was pleased to note that UNDP was joining forces with UNEP to assess the impact of development on the environment in several countries. It was encouraged by that new initiative, which should go a long way towards enhancing understanding of the daunting problems faced by developing countries. For that reason, his delegation believed that technical assistance to enable Governments to incorporate environmental concerns into their long-term development plans was of crucial importance. It was also, however, important that such activities should not overtax the resources and capacities

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of the developing countries. Given that poverty contributed to pollution, its elimination would be of great help to the cause of environmental protection and should therefore be accorded a high priority. His delegation trusted that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992, would advance the objective of sustainable development and welcomed the establishment of the new global environment facility. With regard to UNDP's fifth programming cycle, his delegation wished to draw the Governing Council's attention to the approval by ESCAP, at its forty-seventh session in April at Seoul, of a resolution concerning the Tripartite Review Conference of the Regional Energy Development Programme. In that resolution (E/ESCAP/L.118), ESCAP requested UNDP to continue its support to the Programme in its current form beyond 1991. Although the States members of the Programme were in agreement with the directives of the Council, some difficulties remained as to the timing for the transfer of responsibilities from UNDP to States members of the Programme, which had requested a longer period of time in order to enable the regional energy working group to become self-reliant. Since the Regional Energy Development Programme played a vital role in the ESCAP region, his delegation sincerely hoped that the Council would recommend continuation of UNDP's support to the Programme in its current form.

75. In conclusion, Indonesia considered that, after 40 years of existence, international cooperation for development was more than just a pipe dream, as some continued to believe; it was a practical working proposition that was bearing fruit. However, the gap between North and South persisted, poverty and inequalities were still massive, and the earth's ecosystem was being subjected to repeated assaults. Moreover, increased global interdependence had not halted economic dependence, and the necessary adjustments continued to affect social and economic agendas in many developing countries. Helping to forge strategies that would bring about peace and social justice, and help protect the environment for present and future generations might just prove to be UNDP's greatest challenge.

76. Mr. THOMPSON (Observer for Fiji) said that for over two decades, UNDP had been an active and valuable partner in the development efforts of the island countries of the Pacific subregion. The unique physical characteristics of the 23 island developing countries and territories in the subregion had imposed constraints on their development that had been extremely difficult to overcome. Those constraints were dictated by geography: the islands were widely dispersed and remote, nearly all of them were small, four were classified as least developed, and many were without adequate links to the outside world. Their economies were rudimentary and in many cases still dominated by the subsistence sector, and they were highly vulnerable to the forces of nature. Because of those special characteristics, the island countries had often remained outside the mainstream of international development. Bilateral and multilateral agencies had had to use unorthodox methods to adequately cater for their circumstances. UNDP, in response, had long adopted the cost-effective modality of combining regional programmes with country programmes. The Pacific subregional programme, which was almost as

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large as the combined country IPFs, was the core of UNDP assistance to the South Pacific, and made it possible to concentrate the small country programmes on a few priority areas, while the problems common to most island countries were addressed by the regional programme.

77. The Pacific Meeting of Aid Coordinators (Mini-MAC), which had concluded a few days earlier in Nouméa, had considered the Pacific subregional programme for the fifth cycle and agreed on a programme incorporating four priority development themes: human development and poverty alleviation; natural resources management and environment; economic and financial management and reform; and intraregional cooperation; as well as 15 related programmes and projects. In addition, in the spirit of General Assembly resolution 44/211, joint programming had been proposed with UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO. Participants in the Mini-MAC meeting in Nouméa had also proposed that a detailed study be undertaken of the status of human development in the South Pacific. For the countries of the region, developing rural areas and outer islands and atolls by providing the people of those areas with the means of production posed a major challenge. The geography of an island country naturally fostered over-concentration of socio-economic activity and of population on the capital island, with consequent threat to human welfare and the natural environment, while hardships continued to prevail in rural and outer areas. Indeed, in the context of the South Pacific, poverty alleviation meant the elimination of the development imbalance between urban and rural or outer areas through the creation of productive bases in the latter. Decentralized development and the diversification of production were therefore among Fiji's major long-term objectives. Income-generating opportunities needed to be found in rural areas in such sectors as small-scale fisheries, agriculture and small manufacturing industries, and people should be trained so that they could gain from such opportunities. At the same time, substantial investment was necessary on communications infrastructure and social services so as to prevent or slow the drift from rural and remote areas into the towns.

78. The people of the South Pacific relied heavily on the natural ecosystems and resources of their small island countries. Sustainable use of the natural resources of sea and land and environmental conservation should be given special attention, not only from their own Governments but also from the countries bordering the Pacific Ocean. Due to the lack or shortage of technical expertise in individual countries, that theme was being addressed on a regional cooperative basis under the South Pacific regional environmental programme (SPREP). It was noteworthy that UNDP provided major support in that area under the fifth programming cycle, through SPREP, to build national capacity in environmental management and planning. In addition, UNDP had been able to obtain from the Global Environmental Facility $10 million to finance a regional programme for the South Pacific in biodiversity conservation, a programme that would have significant implications for the nations of the Pacific as well as for the world community in general.

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79. Limited natural resources on land meant that the major drive for future economic development of Pacific island countries must come from marine resources. However, the reefs and near-shore resources in heavily populated areas were already overfished. The tuna resources in the South Pacific were considered adequate to support the economic growth of the small island nations, provided they were properly managed by the islanders themselves. But fisheries in the South Pacific generated only a marginal share of those countries' GDPs. Numerous studies had confirmed the existence of good resource stocks and growing world markets for tuna products, but fishing was chiefly carried out by fishing nations from outside the area. Very little research had been done into the conditions for transferring to the island nations technology relating to tuna fishing. Pacific nations were interested in the experience of other developing countries where the traditional methods of tuna fishing were flourishing; data could be exchanged through TCDC and UNDP could provide extremely valuable external support.

80. As a consequence of the international economic slowdown, during which the GDP of some island countries had actually decreased in real terms, they had become aware of the need to review how they planned and managed their national economies, not only to re-establish external and internal balances, but also to create more independent and self-sustaining national economies. One method being pursued in Fiji was to strengthen the private sector and catalyse its growth potential. New policies had been developed to accelerate private and informal sector development and to create a more efficient public sector. Development planning had been reassessed so as to direct available resources towards priority areas with a view to attaining the above objective. The economic and financial management and reform programme would also affect donor programmes through improved coordination. UNDP had been supporting the aid coordination process in Pacific countries through round-table meetings. However, the difficulty of preparing public investment programmes reflecting clear development policies and focusing on priority areas had been a common problem. In the case of Fiji, a round table had been held in May 1990 in Geneva at which the Government had presented development strategies based on expanding the role of the private sector and a gradual reduction of public sector investment. Donors had strongly supported that approach. During the current year, a follow-up meeting was to be held in Fiji with the support of a country project executed by UNIDO. The Fiji investment forum would bring together donors as well as foreign and domestic private sector parties interested in investing in Fiji, to discuss specific private sector projects and public sector programmes and services in support of those projects.

81. Most of the Pacific island countries were prone to natural disasters, especially tropical cyclones. In the wake of those disasters, UNDP had been extremely helpful, not only in financing disaster relief and rehabilitation programmes under Special Programme Resources but also in coordinating other donor assistance. Under the disaster mitigation and preparedness programme, agreed at the Mini-MAC meeting, the regional cyclone warning and flood forecasting system would be strengthened in the Pacific countries. Fiji

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welcomed the excellent performance of UNDP's development support activities in the South Pacific and was pleased that following the first regional meeting of Pacific island countries and donors held under the auspices of the Forum Secretariat in February 1991, UNDP had initiated a new phase of dialogue between major donors and Pacific regional organizations. That new move for an advanced level of coordination and cooperation among donors, especially at the regional level, should lead to tangible results and enhanced aid effectiveness in the South Pacific.

82. Mr. HAMA (Algeria) said that UNDP's activities in the 1990s were part of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/199. That strategy, along with the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Least Developed Countries, adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session, constituted the new charter for international economic cooperation for the last decade of the century. The objectives of the United Nations system were clearly identified therein, in terms not only of revitalization of growth in developing countries, eradication of poverty, improvement of the international economic environment, particularly in the areas of money, finance and trade, but also of specific measures intended to help the least developed countries. UNDP's mandate was to concentrate its efforts on six priority areas: poverty eradication and grass-roots participation in development, environmental problems and natural resource management, management development, technical cooperation among developing countries, transfer and adaptation of technology for development and women in development.

83. Algeria was pleased that the inclusion of ecological issues in national and regional programmes had been the primary objective of the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe in 1990, and that 35 per cent of the regional projects managed by that Bureau dealt with the environment. The Bureau's programme on environmental protection in the Mediterranean was of great importance to all riparian States. As to the proposal to establish a centre for the environment and development for the Arab region and Europe, Algeria would actively cooperate in setting up the structures while ensuring that use was made of the material and human resources of the countries in the region. Desertification, the most serious ecological problem for more than 40 African and Arab countries, including Algeria, was responsible each year for the loss of more than 6 million hectares and the degradation of 21 million hectares, calling for the adoption of urgent measures and increased support.

84. With regard to technical cooperation among developing countries, the Administrator had correctly stressed in his report (DP/1990/10) that with the added demands of the modernization of the Eastern European economies and the reconstruction requirements of the Middle East, demand for capital was likely to be unusually high. That could have serious implications for lower-income countries. The question of the impact of the recent changes in East-West

(Mr. Hama, Algeria)

relations on world economic growth particularly on the economic growth and development of developing countries, was on the agenda of the Special High-level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council, to be held in Geneva in July 1991. The substantive issue debated at the Algiers Colloquium, organized by UNDP in anticipation of that session, in close cooperation with the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, was whether the recent change in East-West relations did not risk leading to the relaxation of international development efforts. Whatever the outcome of the debate, it was essential that developing countries and the organizations of the United Nations system, particularly UNDP, continue to foster strengthened technical cooperation among developing countries. For its part, Algeria would make a resolute effort on the bilateral or multilateral level, within the Maghreb subregion, the Arab world, Africa and all the other regions of the South. The UNDP Administrator had noted in that regard in document DP/1991/21 that steps had been taken in North Africa to reinforce integration within the Arab Maghreb Union through an economic common market. Algeria hoped that that statement would be reflected in greater support from UNDP for the efforts made by the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union. Since regional and subregional economic groups were becoming a vital necessity for developing countries, UNDP should further support the efforts of the Maghreb countries.

85. The main conclusion of the Human Development Report 1991, namely, that lack of political commitment, rather than lack of financial resources, was usually the real cause of human neglect, unjustly placed responsibility for the failure of their development policies on developing countries. Of course, mistakes had been made, and those countries did not deny it. However, in view of the profound injustice which characterized international economic relations, the instability of the international monetary and financial system, trade protectionism, the deteriorating terms of trade, obstacles to the transfer of technology, etc., one could only conclude that responsibility for the failure of the 1980s - which had very rightly been termed a lost decade for development - should, at the very least, be shared by all the actors in the international community.

86. The Human Development Report sought to rank 88 countries on the basis of a human freedom index consisting of 40 criteria. Despite the difficulty inherent in any attempt to quantify human freedom, which was itself mentioned in the report, that had been done, although Algeria failed to see the point of the exercise for an organization such as UNDP, the principal agent for technical cooperation in the United Nations system. Furthermore, the method was at the very least questionable; how could one find a standardized way of equating the 40 indicators, whose importance varied greatly from one individual to another, from one country to another, and from one civilization to another? In addition, some of the human freedom indicators (the basic right to food, shelter, health, drinking water, the right to education and development, etc.) which developing countries considered to be of high priority were not used at all. Paradoxically, it was precisely those rights that directly related to UNDP's mandate which had been ignored in the human freedom index.

(Mr. Hama, Algeria)

87. Furthermore, the ranking had been made on the basis of data from 1985. The world, and particularly the developing world, had changed profoundly since that time, especially with regard to human freedom. Almost all developing countries had in the late 1980s and early 1990s undergone profound political upheavals which had started them on an irreversible process of increased democratization and protection of human freedom. Publication of that ranking was not the best way of welcoming the efforts being made by developing countries and encouraging them to continue on that path.

88. Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria) said that in spite of numerous worldwide challenges, UNDP had remained steadfast in its responses to virtually all human needs in its areas of operation and was gradually bridging the gap between developed and developing countries, something that the stalled North-South dialogue had been unable to do. It continued to develop into a sort of umbrella that shielded the underprivileged, and justified its mandate by effectively expending donors' contributions to benefit people at the grass-roots level.

89. The Human Development Report 1991, which fully justified the principle that people were the actual target of development, added a new dimension to development efforts. Everyone now accepted that human development was clearly possible. Now, more than ever, perhaps efforts would be made to adequately address poverty reduction, environmental degradation and women in development. Nigeria was categorically opposed to any suggestion that would link the granting of technical assistance to any human freedom criterion. The Administrator had given his assurance that it was not appropriate for UNDP to condition assistance on such a basis.

90. In order to halt the emigration of specialized personnel, which was not a problem peculiar to Nigeria, the Federal Government had recently introduced better working conditions for some categories of workers and similar measures providing incentives would be taken soon in other sectors of the economy. Mention should be made of the African capacity-building initiatives. Nigeria intended to take full advantage of that mechanism for enhancing participatory development. His country noted with satisfaction that the fifth programming cycle was making giant strides towards implementation and hoped to derive maximum benefit from the $109.8 million allocation earmarked for Nigeria together with the national rolling plan for development designed to complement bilateral and multilateral inputs.

91. He was hoped that the crises that had come about in Liberia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, the Sudan and some of the front-line States and had caused the displacement of persons could be speedily resolved. The bold initiatives taken by UNDP in responding to the overwhelming array of challenges were encouraging.

92. The question of support costs, which was currently under consideration, should be resolved in a satisfactory manner in accordance with the emerging tripartite arrangements among the executing agencies, the recipient countries

(Mr. Ayewah, Nigeria)

and UNDP. Referring to another major issue, he stressed the need to delegate authority to the resident representatives through gradual decentralization of project delivery so that they could make meaningful decisions that would reach more people at the grass-roots level.

93. Lastly, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the executing agencies and funds, such as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Health Organization (WHO), cooperation should be further developed among them, which would complement the activities of UNDP as the unique organization that it was.

94. Mr. MOHIUDDIN (Observer for Bangladesh) said that the United Nations was at a crossroads in history where there were many challenges, but also opportunities to promote cooperation. The situation of the developing countries, particularly the LDCs, which were prey to numerous social, economic and ecological problems further aggravated by the consequences of the Gulf war, was very alarming. Many developing countries had initiated a process of economic reform which was politically difficult and socially destabilizing. The need to increase resource flows to those countries to enable them to continue the development process and strengthen their democratic institutions could not be overemphasized. They must be provided with the necessary means to ensure economic growth in order to alleviate poverty and improve their economic, social and ecological situation.

95. As a result of the end of the cold war, it should be possible to make technical cooperation an effective instrument for development. Despite progress made, development had proved to be an elusive goal. Hence the need to search for approaches that were self-sustaining, equitable and ecologically sound and involved all segments of society in development. In accordance with Governing Council decision 90/34, which his country had supported, the Council should concentrate its efforts on the following six areas: poverty eradication and grass-roots participation in development, environmental problems and natural resource management, management development, technical cooperation among developing countries, transfer and adaptation of technology for development, and women in development. In that context, he emphasized that UNDP must maintain its universality, neutrality and the benevolent orientation of its cooperation, which must be in accordance with the priorities and national conditions prevailing in the developing countries. National execution was an essential element for helping developing countries achieve self-reliance. The national institutions which UNDP had been instrumental in setting up over the years should make it possible to use that modality to build national capacities. Bangladesh supported the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211 and felt that it would be useful to strengthen the capacity of UNDP field offices to support the increased number of projects under national execution, intensify training courses to strengthen the capacity of Governments for national execution, give

(Mr. Mohiuddin, Observer, Bangladesh)

greater authority to the field offices through decentralization so that resident representatives could decide on the modalities for national execution of projects, and simplify the procedures for reporting, financial rules and so forth. His country also supported the programme approach based on national plans, objectives and priorities. By placing emphasis on sectoral, subsectoral and thematic links between diverse activities, the effectiveness of UNDP activities in the developing countries could be increased.

96. After the general election in February 1991, democratic government had been restored in Bangladesh and the fourth five-year plan focused in particular on self-reliance, increased efficiency, poverty alleviation and employment generation through human resource development. Faced with immense socio-economic problems, which were aggravated by the consequences of the Gulf war, Bangladesh was again undergoing a very difficult situation. The cyclone that struck the country in April 1991 had left 140,000 people dead and caused considerable material damage in 16 districts. The Government and people of Bangladesh were grateful to the world community for the speedy support that had been provided. The need to sustain that support had been underscored by the Secretary-General in his appeal and by the General Assembly. An inter-agency task force was currently preparing with the Government a report on the necessary medium- and long-term assistance for rehabilitation and reconstruction in the areas devastated, which would be submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its second session. Bangladesh therefore was fully aware of the need for a well-coordinated United Nations response to any emergency situation.

97. Lastly, in accordance with the Paris Programme of Action for the 1990s, the international community must support the efforts of the 42 least developed countries to solve their gigantic problems. The allocation of 55 per cent of IPF for the LDCs was a step in the right direction. The Special Measures Fund for the LDCs and capital development funds should also be strengthened.

The meeting rose at 9.15 p.m.